sary measures to ensure the safety of passengers and their belongings during train journeys. The measures suggested by the Central Government include, *inter alia*, the need for regular meetings between the GRP and the Railway Protection Force (RPF), posting of mobile police force in running trains, improvement in coordination between the police escort and the railway staff, removal of unauthorised hawkers, urchins and other undesirable elements, prompt registration of cases at the first place of reporting, investigation of cases of dacoity and robbery by State CID, maintenance of records of gangs and criminals involved in robberies/dacoities in trains, systematic analysis of crimes in trains, etc. The Railway administration has also taken steps to assist the GRP in checking criminal activities in running trains. These include sharing of intelligence between the RPF and the GRP, introduction of instant action groups in superfast trains to prevent entry of unauthorised persons, assistance by the RPF in escorting passenger trains during night, joint strategy involving the RPF and the GRP to deal with anti-social elements operating in trains, etc.

Stringent Punishment for certain offences

*152. SHRI RAGHAVJI:
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to amend criminal and other laws so as to provide stringent punishment to the rapists, RDX carriers, smugglers and such other criminals; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) A proposal to provide for death penalty for offence of rape is under consideration of the Government. Since Criminal Law is on the Concurrent List of the Constitution, consultation with State Governments/Union Territories Administrations is necessary before amendment to IPC is undertaken. State Governments/Union Territories Administrations have been requested to offer their views. Besides, the proposal was discussed at the recent Chief Ministers' Conference at New Delhi. Majority of the participants endorsed the Central Government's proposal but others wanted some more time to respond to it.

A Bill has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 8, 1998 for amendment to the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 which *inter alia* provides death penalty, or imprisonment for life and fine for explosion of special category of explosive substance which is likely to endanger life or cause serious injury to property.

There is no proposal to amend Customs Act, 1962 or COFEPOSA Act, 1974.

Blast of crude pipeline near Nazira

*153. SHRI AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Oil and Natural Gas Commission's crude pipeline was blasted near Nazira in Sibsagar district near Dikhow river at Mathachiza-Kujibali, on September 9, 1998;

(b) if so, the extent of damage caused; and

(c) how far the efforts to nab the culprits have been successful?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS, (SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The blast caused a minor fire and about 2 feet of the pipeline was blown off. No injury or loss of life is reported. Police has arrested five persons in connection with the incident.

Jail Manuals

*154. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many jail manuals in the country are more than 40